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Post-independence Educational Planning and Classroom Practice

Introduction

Chapter Five posited that the objective conditions of the socio-cultural environment permit the production and reproduction of human practices. This means that in every context where reproduction is possible, there must be certain stable elements which allow both production and reproduction of stable practices to take place. If there were no such elements, reproduction would be extremely difficult. The same logic pertains to pedagogical styles as human practices. We can argue that the production and reproduction of teaching methods that are associated with the banking-education pedagogical paradigm in public schools in Botswana and Africa in general is sustained by certain stable elements in the socio-cultural ambiance. In the words of Bartlett (1991:24):

> Persistent actions require a set of stabilised elements or set of conditions which allow the actions themselves to be reproduced. The elements or conditions are defined as social structure…

What then are the stabilized elements or conditions that allow the persistence of teacher-centred methods in the African context? They include the dominant objectivist view of knowledge and the structures of domination and subordination. I would like to add to these the utilitarian view of schooling/ education engendered by manpower planning, the education system's (centralized or decentralized) organizational structure and, lastly, curricula arrangements. The latter is discussed in detail in Chapter Eight. In this chapter,

I concentrate on the first two. These stabilized elements, being aspects of the socio-cultural context, inform teachers' and students' classroom practices. Because they are part of the immunological condition of the environment, they have implications for pedagogical change. Overlooking their potential as barriers to pedagogical innovation in favour of a technicist stance may lead to innovation rejection.

Human Resource Planning in the Post-1966 era

Britain's indifferent attitude towards native education was to have a profound effect on Botswana. At independence in 1966, Botswana found itself with a poorly developed educational infrastructure with which to support the country's expanding administrative services. The government's priority, therefore, became the expansion of educational provision in order to meet the country's human resource development needs. Vanqa (1989:28) clearly captures this dire situation:

> To read the story of education and its development in Botswana after 1966 is to read the story of manpower (sic) needs for an emerging country. When Botswana gained her independence from Britain, it became crucial for the country to have a viable programme to produce manpower (sic) to cater for the growing social, economic and administrative services.

This human resource development-oriented educational planning of post-independence Botswana had pedagogical consequences. The mode of planning may have assisted in perpetuating the pedagogical style which had a foundation laid by traditional and missionary education. The mode of planning led to the development of a *utilitarian perception* of education – the view that education/schooling is an important vehicle for social mobility. This view of education promotes the liberal myth that everyone has the chance to climb the social ladder through education, that is, by passing examinations. It is not an overstatement to say that in Botswana and indeed sub-Saharan Africa as a whole there is no conception of education other than the utilitarian one. It pervades most aspects of schooling. It is often reflected in school logos and mottos, which are imprinted on the badges of students' school uniforms as a constant reminder that through education they will ultimately be able to lead better lives. For example, take this motto from one of the schools studied: *'Thuto ke thobo ya Bokamoso',* translated as *'Education is a harvest for the future'.* This 'harvest' is none other than an economic one. The utilitarian view is shared by teachers, students and parents. Davies (1988:300), in an ethnographic study of two senior secondary schools in Botswana, reported

this 'extraordinary congruence in the aims of teachers and students'. Whether this utilitarian view of education/schooling is realistic or misplaced is not the concern here. Instead, the concern is the effect of this conception of education on teachers' and students' understanding of teaching and learning.

Botswana's economic growth rate increased significantly after independence in 1966, from 7 percent per year at independence to 15 percent per year at the end of the 1960s (Colclough and McCarthy 1980:57). Between 1966 and 1974, two important mines – Orapa (diamonds) and Selibe-Phikwe (copper/ nickel) – were opened, increasing both public and private sector employment. A desperate situation developed in which job opportunities were increasing but with very few qualified citizens to take them up. Securing a clerical job depended on one holding a certificate. There developed a quest for certificates, and consequently, for the education that provided this result.

In no way is it being suggested that this craving for certificates was an exclusively post-independence phenomenon. In fact, it is interesting to see how the colonial administration's policy of recruiting locals encouraged this yearning for certificates. At the time of colonial administration, Africans were denied the opportunity to occupy important positions in the administrative structures. This was often justified by arguing that they 'lacked the formal qualifications of European incumbents' (Gossett 1986:304). It was to be expected that many individual Batswana would begin to aim at obtaining equivalent qualifications. As Cooper (1982) observes, salaries depended directly on academic qualifications. In view of the recurring droughts and the limits on the numbers of migrant labourers going to South African mines, employment in the colonial administration became the only viable means of leading a better life. That education paid dividends was conspicuously clear to everyone. An African bureaucrat in the colonial administration was much better off than the peasant. Better income for the African bureaucrat (as compared to the peasant) was often justified by pointing to the importance of education as qualification. Sir Richard Ramage, who was appointed in 1961 to review the structures of the public services in Basutoland (present-day Lesotho), Bechuanaland (Botswana) and Swaziland, justified the big gap in earnings between the African bureaucrat and the peasant by arguing that the gap 'provides the inducement to the peasant to educate his children so as to qualify them in that respect for a higher standard of living than that of the parents' (1961:13-14).

Education/schooling (and a certificate) naturally came to be seen as the gateway to procuring a job, and as a result, a better life, not just for oneself,

but for one's parents as well. The term 'qualification' became a catchword. Even securing a clerical job in the formal sector depended on one holding a required minimum qualification. Education became synonymous with certification. This situation prevails today and has led to an even greater quest for certificates, a syndrome Dore (1976) describes in his book, *The Diploma Disease*. Gossett (1986:307) describes the current situation in Botswana in the following words:

> In recruiting administrative personnel, Botswana makes extensive use of certificates. Direct entry to any but the lowest levels of the service has been tied to possession of a particular certificate…. few applicants or hiring officials seem to expect many without the proper certificate to achieve a higher rank. At least since independence, Botswana has viewed education as a way to provide individuals with the certificates, and hopefully the skills to fill various occupations in the public and private sector.

It is also one's level of education that determines the level of entry and progress in the labour market:

> And since there are few alternative patterns of mobility in Botswana access to the most senior and financially rewarding positions in the occupational structure became more and more dependent upon the certifying functions of schools and hence upon examination success. The certificate thus becomes the major filter, determining life chances and the more external the examination is the more the allocation appears objective and just" (Francis 1979:7).

The higher the demand for certificates, the more competitive and selective examinations become. Education, therefore, becomes a vehicle for social mobility. Francis (1979) has employed Turner's (1961) classificatory framework of modes of ascent, specifically 'sponsored' and 'contest' mobility, to explain the selective nature of education in Botswana. Sponsored mobility is a controlled selection process. As Francis (1979:8) puts it, 'Mobility is neither won nor seized but rather is a process of sponsored induction into the elite subsequent upon selection'. Contest mobility, on the other hand, implies that there is a competition open to all on an equal footing, with victory being gained by one's own efforts:

> The governing objective of contest mobility is to give elite status to those who earn it, while the goal of sponsored mobility is to make the best use of the talents in society by sorting each person into his proper niche (Turner 1961:123).

Francis concludes that the educational system in Botswana closely approximates Turner's model of sponsored mobility, the major selection criterion being success in school examinations. Human resource projections

by the government determine the number of students entering post-secondary schooling each year. Only a minority of students who take the Senior Certificate examinations proceeds to tertiary level institutions. Human resource planning, therefore, has reinforced the sponsored mobility system. The former has also restricted educational opportunities but has at the same time greatly rewarded success (by way of high salaries). Such a system promotes the liberal myth that everyone has the chance of climbing the social ladder through education, that is, by passing examinations. The 'backwash' effects of such a view of education are clear. Teaching/learning become geared towards preparing students for the examinations. In the classroom, the tendency is for the teacher to emphasise factual information which can be communicated to the students in a didactic fashion.

Classroom research studies reviewed in Chapter One overwhelmingly reveal that teachers in sub-Saharan Africa see their job as one of mainly imparting and delivering school knowledge and keeping order in the classroom. Conversely, students see their own role as that of receiving the teachers' knowledge. Parents, on their part, see the role of students as one of listening to and carrying out the teachers' orders. These views, in addition to shaping classroom practice, produce certain pressures on the school, on teachers and on students. The school is under pressure from the state and the general public to produce good results; the teacher is under double pressure from parents and the school administration to produce good results; students are under pressure from parents to do well. These pressures give rise to implicit views on teaching and learning. If the role of the teacher is perceived as that of providing knowledge then his/her duty is to 'teach'. Where the role of the student is to receive knowledge, then her/his duty is to 'learn' by assimilating the knowledge provided by the teacher. The best teaching method in this context becomes one that is thought most likely to produce the best examinations results. If teachers see their primary task as that of helping students pass examinations, the tendency is to teach for the examination. If students in turn equate schooling with passing examinations, the tendency is to expect the teacher to 'spoon-feed' them to pass the examinations. Ultimately, the emphasis in teaching and learning is placed on facts and learning by rote, the sort of 'right-answerism' discussed in Chapter Three.

Jones (1989:27) argues that a 'positive view of school is coupled with particular ideas about how to go about acquiring the necessary credentials'. Interviews with students, teachers and parents revealed that these groups held a strong, utilitarian view of education/schooling and the view promoted and sustained a transmission-reception pedagogical style.

Teachers' Perspectives on Schooling/Education

Teachers understood schooling in terms such as: 'Schooling prepares our students for the future, for different vocations in society.' 'Schooling is meant to prepare students for certificates so that they can have a career to follow.' 'The whole aim of schooling is for one to have a brighter future, find a job and live better.' Because of this vocational view of schooling, all the teachers interviewed had one main future expectation of their students – for them to pass their Cambridge Overseas School Certificate (COSC) examinations and go on to further education which would then guarantee them well-paid jobs. The teachers' classroom activities, therefore, revolved around preparing their students for the COSC examinations. In the teachers' view, the schools possessed the curriculum knowledge which the students needed in order to pass their examinations. Their main duty as teachers was to ensure that their students acquired the curriculum knowledge. It is not surprising, therefore, that teachers described their own classroom roles and responsibilities in terms such as, 'My foremost responsibility is to impart knowledge and to manage the class, making sure there is order'. 'My role is to deliver the goods to the students. I have to make sure that I give them notes, and I have to test their understanding by assessing them.' 'The main role of the teacher is to teach students and also to get feedback from students through tests and assignments.' If the pattern of school work was centred on the teacher, with control being of prime concern to the teacher, then only paternalistic student-teacher relationships could be expected. Teachers made it clear in staff room gossip that they expected deference and subservience from students.

Conversely, students' roles were described as those of acquiring and assimilating knowledge. Furthermore, teaching was described in terms of giving out and imparting school knowledge. Learning, on the other hand, was described in terms of acquiring and assimilating knowledge. The pedagogic implications of this schism between teaching and learning are discussed below.

Students' Perspectives on Schooling/Education

Like their teachers, the students interviewed saw schooling/education in purely utilitarian terms. Their learning activities had a single goal: to enable them to pass their COSC examinations so as to obtain a certificate that would subsequently enable them to either go on to further education or join the (shrinking) labour market. 'I want to acquire knowledge so that I can be marketable in future.' 'I want to get the necessary grades that will allow me to pursue a course at the tertiary level of education.' 'I want to gain knowledge and a certificate. I want to attain credits in all subjects so that I may get a certificate.'

All the students interviewed stressed that they could only obtain the necessary credentials for furthering their education or getting a well-paid job by 'working hard'. Asked to elaborate on what they understood by working hard the students mentioned the following: 'Doing work assigned by the teacher.' 'Following teacher instructions.' 'Revising work done with the teacher.' 'Listening attentively to the teacher.' 'Reading extensively.' 'Asking and answering questions.' It was by being engaged in such activities that the students felt they were gaining the school knowledge that they needed to get the certificates. It was also clear from the students' statements that school knowledge more or less meant the same thing as the teacher's knowledge. Since it was the teacher who possessed school knowledge, these students saw their primary task as that of receiving the teacher's knowledge. This receiving of the teacher's knowledge constituted their understanding of doing school work: 'Doing school work means doing what the teacher says you must do and cooperating with teachers and other students in class activities.' 'It means being taught by the teacher in class, doing practicals and reading privately.' 'Reading and obtaining as much information from the teacher in the form of exercises and notes.' 'Studying by yourself and asking the teacher when you do not understand.' It was the students' understanding of *doing school work as receiving* the teacher's knowledge that helped them define their own as well as the teachers' roles and responsibilities in class. This was also a view shared by parents who also believed that students acquired school knowledge by listening and carrying out orders from the teacher and by studying hard.

The utilitarian view causes a significant schism between teaching and learning. As we have just seen from the empirical study, there is a tendency to view these as two distinct but inextricably related activities. They are often viewed as converse terms. One becomes meaningless without the other. This teach-learn converse places the teacher in a very powerful position and it also serves to demarcate role boundaries between the teacher and the students. The teacher 'teaches' and the student 'learns'. Paradoxically, this distinction also describes a relationship, and one that indicates the direction of the flow of information in the classroom: from the teacher to the learner. Such a relationship is in perfect harmony with the banking theory of education. Because in this theory, teaching and learning are mechanistic and deductive processes, it is inevitable that emphasis in the classroom would be placed on fact-learning and rote-learning. Interactive teaching/learning methods (such as group discussions and role play) which characterize a learner-centred pedagogy come to be viewed as dysfunctional in that they are not perceived as being directly related to the passing of examinations, and also that they deprive the learners of an

opportunity to apply their rote-learning skills (Holliday 1991). This is a critical point because to these students, learning by rote is not necessarily perceived as a burden, but rather as an asset because it is directly related to their utilitarian view of schooling. Hence the observation by Prophet and Rowell (1993) that teachers, students and school administrators in Botswana are generally happy with the quality of teacher-dominated classroom interactions.

Also, it would be unreasonable to expect teachers to see anything wrong with emphasizing facts and rote learning. After all, this kind of learning worked well for them, hence their privileged position in society. If it worked for them then there is no reason why it should not work for the students as well. Moreover, to the majority of local teachers this is the only form of learning and teaching they know of. Research shows that teachers are conservative. Lortie (1975) argues that teachers have never left the classroom. As students, they internalized certain models of teacher behaviour so they tend to emulate those models in their teaching.

Implications of the Utilitarian view for Pedagogical Change

The views of education held by parents, teachers and students have implications for classroom practice, and ultimately, for pedagogic change. Innovations that seem to be working against those views may not be acceptable to classroom participants. I have made an attempt to demonstrate how the state's human resource development policy might have helped to promote a utilitarian view of education. The empirical study also revealed that students and their teachers saw education as a means to an end, this being in line with a utilitarian view of education. What the empirical study was not able to establish conclusively though, was that these conceptions (of teachers and students) were necessarily or directly shaped by government policy on human resources development. But because the policy encourages the utilitarian view of education, it is plausible to postulate that it might have helped shape teachers', students' and parents' perspectives on teaching and learning. These perspectives, as I have argued above, might have evolved as antithetical to the learner-centred pedagogy that is advocated in both *Education for Kagisano* (Social Harmony) (1977) and the *Revised National Policy on Education* (RNPE) (1994) but quite compatible with the demands of the banking education pedagogy. The latter demands the separation of the subject of the learning process from its object, that is, it encourages the teach-learn converse, thus a deductive approach to teaching/learning. Learner-centred pedagogy, on the other hand, demands the blurring of the subject-object, teach-learn dichotomies and encourages an

inductive approach to learning. It demands that the teacher acts as a facilitator in the students' learning process and that the latter be active participants in their own learning. To expect teachers and students to shift from the banking-education pedagogical style to a learner-centred one is necessarily to expect them to make a paradigm shift. However, they may not be prepared to do this as it would have a destabilizing effect on their taken-for-granted classroom world, possibly leading to deskilling and cognitive dissonance. The shift might also be made difficult by the fact that these teachers and students might know very little or nothing at all about the inductive approach. Barjesteh and Holliday, as cited in Holliday (1991:346) argue that:

> Students who seem to have been brought up on the deductive approach . . . want superficial knowledge (to learn) for the examinations (through which) they want to move quickly and are unwilling to discuss and explore.

This emphasis upon examinations (hence on the deductive approach), as I have already stated, is inextricably tied to the utilitarian perception of education/ schooling. It now becomes easy to understand why and how the utilitarian view of education may act as a buffer to pedagogic change. This means that for as long as this view of schooling prevails, it will continue promoting deductive approaches that are antithetical to the inductive, learner-centred approaches advocated in major education policy texts. The utilitarian view of education, therefore, constitutes a stabilized element in Africa which allows for the production and reproduction of teaching/learning methods closely associated with banking education. It gives meaning to the teachers' and students' day-to-day classroom practices. It exists as an objective condition which students, teachers and parents have internalized as part of their mode of thinking or consciousness, and it sets parameters within which they may innovate, while at the same time giving rise to spontaneous practices that are pre-adapted to it and taken for granted by teachers and students. In short, the utilitarian view of education is part and parcel of the immunological condition of the educational environment in Botswana, and in Africa generally. Pedagogical innovations such as those proposed in many countries in Africa have to comply with this condition or risk tissue rejection. This appears to have been the fate of the learner-centred pedagogy advocated by the two commissions on education in Botswana. The historical and empirical evidence indicates that the authoritarian pedagogical style that characterizes classroom practice in Botswana schools to such an extent evolved over a long period of time and is now part of the immunological condition of the education system. Pedagogic innovations that are not pre-adapted to this condition cannot be

easily institutionalized. I have attempted to demonstrate that the values central to the learner-centred pedagogy are incompatible with the immunological condition of the Botswana education system. For this reason we may regard this pedagogy as foreign to Botswana, and it would be most appropriate to treat it as a transferred innovation.

That the transfer of educational innovations in general from developed to developing countries is problematic has been noted by many researchers with interest in innovation transfer. Hurst (1975) notes that the practice of importing innovations from the Western world began with the importation into colonial territories (such as Bechuanaland) of formal educational systems and institutions based on Western models. Little cognizance was taken of the fact that the social context from which the innovations originated could have been significantly different from their new host environment. Dalin (1978) rightly cautions us against the blind borrowing of Western-initiated innovations. He argues that many of the innovations that have been implemented throughout the Western world (e.g. student-active learning, inquiry-based learning and open education) reflect social and cultural changes in that environment, a point discussed in Chapter Three. Similar changes may not be occurring in less-developed countries (LDCs). For this reason, Dalin predicted (and experience has vindicated him) that many LDCs would experience difficulties in implementing these very same innovations since their success or failure would be influenced by factors beyond the reach of the educational system – factors such as cultural traditions, traditional authority structures and parental expectations. This was indeed a prophetic observation.

The argument advanced above should not be misconstrued to mean that the borrowing of innovations is wrong *per se*. It only serves to sensitise us to the fact that it becomes imperative to assess the feasibility of a transferred innovation *vis-à-vis* the changed cultural setting in order to minimize the chances of tissue rejection of the innovation. This is an area seriously under-researched in Africa which, ironically, is a big borrower of Western-initiated curricular and pedagogic innovations. This gap in the case of Botswana has been observed by Prophet (1990), who has called for research on the extent to which the worldview of Tswana culture reinforces or contradicts the views being promoted in schooling, an attempt I have made in Chapter Five. As part of their contribution to the general literature on the international transfer of innovations, Vulliamy and Carrier (1985:29) urge Third World educational planners to do away with the fallacious belief that '…educational planning can proceed in a sociological vacuum, that socio-cultural studies

are of negligible importance compared to curriculum evaluation, in-service training and the inculcation of technical skills". This effectively is an attack on the technicist approach to issues of curriculum and pedagogy.

The Education System's Organisational Structure: A Support Structure

One other factor that has helped shape classroom practice in Botswana, as in many other countries, has been the highly centralised system of education which, as Fuller (1991) observes, was built from colonial forms of administration, relying on hierarchical social relations. Why did the Botswana government 'opt' for a centralised system of education at independence? Many different reasons may be given for this, but two stand out as more plausible. The first, which we have already discussed, is that the economic imperative to provide human resources to run the economy was overwhelming. It was thought that a centralised system in full government control would accomplish this mammoth task. The second reason was political. Education was widely seen as a tool that could be used for nation building through political integration. At independence, Botswana comprised disparate tribal groupings, with each group seeing itself as an 'independent' nation. There was, therefore, a need to build a nation-state with inhabitants whose loyalty was to the nation, not to their tribes. As Marope (1994:34) notes:

> Strong tribal patriotism still prevailed even after independence, with most Batswana perceiving themselves as belonging to their tribes and as owing tribute and loyalty to their chiefs.

In light of this situation, it was imperative to forge a national identity. A centralized national system was the favoured arrangement because it held the promise, real or illusory, of addressing regional disparities in educational opportunities that was self-evident at independence in 1966. Political integration was a priority for the Seretse administration:

> The primary aim of the Government of the new Republic of Botswana will be to take all steps necessary to create a strongly united nation, to overcome all parochial, tribal or racial rivalries and make clear to the whole world our determination to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereign independence of our country" (Republic of Botswana 1966 Foreword)

Inequity in education posed a serious threat to the realization of the political integration objective. The ideal arrangement for dealing with this potential threat, it was surmised, was a framework of a centralized national education system with a homogenized view of the child in which the curriculum,

pedagogy and assessment were standardized (Pansiri 2007). This system would turn out to be highly centralized, with a standardized and uniform curriculum driven by the ideology of 'educational merit', defined as 'ability plus effort' (Marginson 1999:28). The ideology was aimed at breaking up the traditional, ascriptive, status-allocation mechanism prevalent in pre-independence 'fiefdoms', the ultimate objective being the weakening of tribal patriotism and bolstering of loyalty to the emerging nation-state. Furthermore, a centralized education system was expected to facilitate fair and equitable distribution of educational resources, thereby achieving the goal of equity. Such a centralized education system with a standardized curriculum and assessment regime leaves little room for celebrating diversity and the local. In fact, diversity was frowned upon since, in the eyes of the national polity, it stood in stark contrast to political integration. Centralised control of education was not in any way a consideration peculiar to Botswana, though. All over Africa post-colonial governments viewed education as an instrument for nation building, and to leave it to local authorities was a move few politicians would ever countenance.

However, the central or local control of education has implications for pedagogical practices. With regard to the effects of the national context of an education system, Broadfoot and Osborn (1988:265) observe that:

> …the national context within which teachers work deeply influences their professional ideology, their perceptions of their professional responsibility, and the way they carry out their day to day work.

The hypothesis that the way education is organised in a country (centralised or decentralised) will affect the classroom practices of teachers and students has been explored in a growing number of studies adopting a comparative perspective (e.g. Broadfoot and Osborn 1988; Fuller 1991; Stevenson and Baker 1991).

Stevenson and Baker (1991) set out in their study to find out whether the institutional issues of fifteen educational systems constrained the classroom practices of mathematics teachers. Their general finding was that the level of state control of the curriculum impacted upon teachers' classroom instruction. Teachers in centralised educational systems were more likely to use more didactic and inflexible teaching methods, whereas those in decentralised systems had the 'discretion in how they handle classroom instruction and learning' (Stevenson and Baker 1991:2).

In their comparative study of how two contrasting national educational systems (the French system and the English and Welsh system) influenced

teachers' conceptions of their work, Broadfoot and Osborn (1988) found that French primary schools teachers had a restricted view of their professional role, an axiomatic conception of teaching, and tended to put more stress on the product than on the process of learning. Teachers in England and Wales, on the other hand, had an extended view of their role, saw teaching as problematic and stressed the process of learning rather than its product. Broadfoot and Osborn attributed these differences in role conceptions to the different educational systems – the highly centralised French system tended to routinise teachers' work, hence their restricted and axiomatic conception of their role. The decentralised English and Welsh systems offered teachers autonomy, hence their extended and problematised conception of teaching. Their study was carried out within the context of an educational system (the English and Welsh system) that had become more centralised since the Conservative Party assumed power in 1979. Fuller (1991:68) also stresses that in many 'fragile' states, education ministries control curriculum content by offering a 'universal curriculum, standard materials, teachers' guides, and national examinations that enforce routinised forms of knowledge and facts'. Thus, the national context of an educational system is an important variable in educational change. This is because the context has a considerable 'impact on the way teachers see their task and the way they do their work (Broadfoot and Osborn 1988:267).

In the case of Botswana, researchers have found that the country's centralised educational system negatively affects classroom instruction. Davies (1988) identifies two aspects of 'central' control in Botswana that standardise and routinise official practice: international examinations and national syllabuses. Fuller et al. (1994:143) argue that, '*over time, these structural foundations may have encouraged a pedagogical emphasis on relaying factual information via simple didactic routines'.* Fuller (1991) contends that because the teachers' duties are predetermined by central authority, their role becomes routinised and mechanical. The result is a technicist approach to teaching, paralleling deskilling, (Davies 1988) and a pedagogical style reflecting the bureaucratic organisation of the school structure, knowledge and the educational system as a whole.

To illustrate the general point about the impact of organizational structures on teachers' and students' classroom, I present below the case of Mapoka Senior Secondary School (a pseudonym) which had an organisational structure that not only mirrored the general structure of the education system in the country but also typified the structures of public schools.

Organisational Features of Mapoka Senior Secondary School (MSSS)

The organisational structure of MSSS was typical of all other public senior secondary schools in the country. The headmaster was at the top (and accountable to the Director of Teaching Service Management in the Ministry of Education), followed by his deputy, then heads of department (senior teachers), and these were followed by 'ordinary' teachers. At the bottom of the pyramid were the students. In this hierarchical structure, power and authority decrease as one moves down the hierarchy. Students had no *formal* power. The school's administration was centralised in a single building although science teachers tended largely to confine themselves to their laboratories. As in Everhart's (1983) study, there was emphasis on student separateness at MSSS. The significance of this separateness lies in the fact that it emphasises the difference between teachers as adults and students as children, portraying the latter as immature, thus perpetuating the view of students as empty vessels. Officially, the staff room and staff houses were no-go areas for students. This tended to ensure that the relationship between the teachers and students was formal.

The notion of formality is important here. Waller (1965) associates formality with impersonality and social distance, as well as with relationships between juniors and superiors. Formality implies hierarchical relationships. Teachers at MSSS insisted on students addressing them by their title of 'Mr.' For students to call teachers by their first name was unimaginable. All the teachers interviewed at the school stated that they would 'go wild' if a student dared call them by their first name. This insistence on formality was a way of maintaining social distance between themselves and the students. Edwards and Furlong (1978:25) contend that when formality is repeatedly practiced it becomes 'part of the definition of the relationship'. However, by formalizing most social and learning aspects of classroom practice, teachers are able to remain in control of the situation. Unfortunately for classroom practice, formality sustains asymmetrical classroom relationships and an implicit authoritarian pedagogy.

All these official rules and regulations emphasise to students who they are in the school structure. Not only do they come to know that they are not teachers, they also come to know that they are *different* from teachers. Although student separateness is an ubiquitous phenomenon found in even the most progressive of schools, its effects on the other aspects of schooling tend to be more deleterious where it (student separateness) is sanctioned through official rules and regulations. One such effect is that it tends to widen the teach-learn schism. The more students see themselves as 'learners' the more dependent on

the teacher they become. The more the teachers see themselves as different from students, the more authoritarian their teaching and relationship with students become. The final result is the cyclical reproduction of authoritarianism and the deepening of the myth of students as 'deficit systems'.

This was what appeared to be happening at MSSS. One would reasonably expect the same in schools that are similarly hierarchically structured. Such organisational conditions are not favourable for the introduction of a learner-centred pedagogy. As Rowell (1995) has stated, a learner-centred pedagogy is 'democratic in action' and sees the learner as capable of constituting the world. Democratic action may not be sustained where the structures themselves are undemocratic. A hierarchically organised educational system can only be expected to promote an authoritarian pedagogical style in schools. We saw in Chapter Three in the case of the private, independent secondary school that democratic action was reflected in and facilitated by the school's architectural design and organizational structure. This shows that even within a single educational system, teaching practices may vary among schools depending on their organizational structures and whether they are private or public schools. It is in this sense that I am arguing that the centralized, hierarchically organized education system of many sub-Saharan African education systems constitute a stabilized element which allows for the persistence of teacher-centred pedagogical styles.

Conclusion

This chapter has argued that the persistence of the teacher-centred pedagogical paradigm in Botswana or Africa in general is made possible by a set of conditions, among them the utilitarian view of schooling (which is engendered by the view that formal education bestows material benefits on those who are able to acquire it) and hierarchical organizational structures. The utilitarian view of education in turn structures teacher and student perspectives on what constitutes acceptable behaviour in the classroom. It also helps to define a host of other issues, such as understanding of 'teaching' and 'learning', 'doing school work as receiving teacher's knowledge', 'working hard' as the student's successful move into the teacher's world of meanings (Edwards and Furlong 1978) and so forth. These definitions demarcate very clearly the role boundaries. Persistence of these internalized definitions has a reproductive function. This is compounded further by the hierarchical social relations encouraged by hierarchical organizational structures characteristic of many schools in sub-Saharan Africa. All this acts as a support structure for teacher-centredness.